

## Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 /065 W

----- 087845

O 131130Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1009

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 1165

ROME FOR FAA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CIVAIR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: INDIAN AIRLINES HIJACKING

REF: LAHORE 1162 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. ENGLISH AND URDU PRESS SEPTEMBER 13 HEADLINED STORY ABOUT CAPTURE OF HIJACKERS. (THERE WERE NO PAPERS PREVIOUS DAY DUE TO OBSERVANCE OF MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY ON SATURDAY.) ACCORDING TO PAKISTAN TIMES, FOUR COMMANDOS RUSHED ABOARD AIRCRAFT AND DISARMED HIJACKERS AFTER THEY HAD BEEN DRUGGED. ACCOUNT STATED HIJACKERS REQUESTED TO TALK TO PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AT ONE POINT BUT WERE TOLD THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. THEY REPORTEDLY THREATENED TO BLOW UP PLANE. THEY WERE TOLD THAT IF THEY WANTED TO TALK, THEY WOULD HAVE TO NEGOTIATE WITH INDIAN AMBASSADOR BAJPAI. THIS TRIGGERED A LONG  
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SERIES OF NEGOTIATIONS SATURDAY NIGHT BETWEEN HIJACKERS

AND INDIANS, WHO REPORTEDLY WERE RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS FROM NEW DELHI BY TELEPHONE. ONCE PASSENGERS, CREW AND HIJACK LEADER -- HE ACCOMPANIED PASSENGERS TO TERMINAL -- WERE REMOVED, REMAINING FIVE HIJACKERS WERE GIVEN DRUGGED WATER ENABLING COMMANDOS TO RUSH ABOARD AND CAPTURE THEM.

2. PAKISTAN TIMES ARTICLE STATED THAT INDIAN AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO PAK AUTHORITIES FOR CAPTURING HIJACKERS AND RECOVERING PASSENGERS AND CREW. GULAB SINGH SHAKTAWAT, RAJASTHAN STATE MINISTER FOR HOME, INDUSTRIES AND LOCAL BODIES, THANKED GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN (GOP) FOR ITS ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE FOR PASSENGERS. (SHAKTAWAT HAD BEEN PASSENGER ABOARD HIJACKED AIRCRAFT.) INDIAN AIRLINES CREW, WHICH ARRIVED WITH A SECOND AIRCRAFT TO TAKE PASSENGERS BACK TO NEW DELHI SATURDAY MORNING, HAD SIMILAR PRAISE FOR PAK AUTHORITIES.

3. STORY ON BACK PAGE PAKISTAN TIMES DATED NEW DELHI REPORTED THAT PALAM AIRPORT SECURITY STAFF HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN WAKE OF HIJACKING. SEPARATE BACK PAGE ARTICLE DATED KARACHI HIGHLIGHTED REMARKS BYRAJ BAHADUR, INDIAN MINISTER FOR CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, WHO THANKED PAKS FOR HELP DURING HIJACKING. INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA WAS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE CONVEYED THANKS TO PAK AMBASSADOR FIDA HASSAN IN NEW DELHI FOR SAFE RETURN OF PASSENGERS AND CREW.

4. IN SEPTEMBER 13 EDITORIAL INDEPENDENT NAWA-I-WAQT SUGGESTED HIJACKERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO INDIA WITH PASSENGERS. VERNACULAR MASHRIQ EDITORIAL SPECULATED THAT HIJACKERS MIGHT BE MEMBERS OF ANTI-INDIRA UNDERGROUND LINKED TO GEORGE FERNANDEZ, OPPOSITION LABOR LEADER NOW IN JAIL. NONE WAS CRITICAL OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND THERE WAS NO SPECULATION ABOUT IDENTITY OF HIJACKERS, EXCEPT THAT THEY SPOKE URDU OR HINDUSTANI.

5. PRESS VERSION OF COMMANDO CAPTURE OF HIJACKERS APPEARS EXAGGERATED. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OPERATION WOULD HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT WHEN PASSENGERS, CREW AND HIJACK LEADER WERE ALREADY SAFELY IN PAK CUSTODY. WHATEVER TRUE STORY OF THIS BIZARRE HIJACK  
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ATTEMPT, IT IS EVIDENT THAT INDIANS AND PAKISTANIS MADE EVERY EFFORT TO COOPERATE AND AVOID ALLOWING INCIDENT TO GET OUT OF HAND. HIJACKED PLANE LEFT FOR NEW DELHI 1515 HOURS SEPTEMBER 12. ONLY LOOSE END NOW IS FATE OF SIX HIJACKERS, WHO REPORTEDLY ARE UNDER PAK MILITARY CUSTODY.  
GIBNEY

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## Message Attributes

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**Control Number:** n/a  
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